

# THE YEARS BETWEEN

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

THE SEVEN SEAS

THE FIVE NATIONS

DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES

# THE YEARS BETWEEN

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## DEDICATION

TO THE SEVEN WATCHMEN

*SEVEN Watchmen sitting in a tower,  
Watching what had come upon mankind,  
Showed the Man the Glory and the Power,  
And bade him shape the Kingdom to his mind.  
'All things on Earth your will shall win you'  
(Twas so their counsel ran)  
'But the Kingdom—the Kingdom is within you,'  
Said the Man's own mind to the Man.  
For time, and some time—  
As it was in the bitter years before,  
So it shall be in the over-sweetened hour—  
That a man's mind is wont to tell him more  
Than Seven Watchmen sitting in a tower.*

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## THE ROWERS

1902

(When Germany proposed that England should help her in a  
naval demonstration to collect debts from Venezuela.)

THE banked oars fell an hundred strong,  
And backed and threshed and ground,  
But bitter was the rowers' song  
As they brought the war-boat round.

They had no heart for the rally and roar  
That makes the whale-bath smoke—  
When the great blades cleave and hold and leave  
As one on the racing stroke.

They sang :—‘What reckoning do you keep,  
And steer her by what star,

If we come unscathed from the Southern  
    deep  
To be wrecked on a Baltic bar?

‘Last night you swore our voyage was  
    done,  
    But seaward still we go,  
And you tell us now of a secret vow  
    You have made with an open foe!

‘That we must lie off a lightless coast  
    And haul and back and veer,  
At the will of the breed that have wronged  
    us most  
For a year and a year and a year!

‘There was never a shame in Christendie  
    They laid not to our door—  
And you say we must take the winter sea  
    And sail with them once more?

‘Look South ! The gale is scarce o’erpast  
That stripped and laid us down,  
When we stood forth but they stood fast  
And prayed to see us drown

‘Our dead they mocked are scarcely cold,  
Our wounds are bleeding yet—  
And you tell us now that our strength is  
sold  
To help them press for a debt !

‘Neath all the flags of all mankind  
That use upon the seas,  
Was there no other fleet to find  
That you strike hands with these ?

‘Of evil times that men can choose  
On evil fate to fall,  
What brooding Judgment let you loose  
To pick the worst of all ?

‘ In sight of peace—from the Narrow Seas

O’er half the world to run—

With a cheated crew, to league anew

With the Goth and the shameless Hun!’

## THE VETERANS

Written for the gathering of survivors of the Indian Mutiny,  
Albert Hall, 1907.)

To-DAY, across our fathers' graves,  
The astonished years reveal  
The remnant of that desperate host  
Which cleansed our East with steel.

Hail and farewell! We greet you here,  
With tears that none will scorn—  
O Keepers of the House of old,  
Or ever we were born !

One service more we dare to ask—  
Pray for us, heroes, pray,  
That when Fate lays on us our task  
We do not shame the Day !



## THE DECLARATION OF LONDON

JUNE 29, 1911

(‘On the re-assembling of Parliament after the Coronation, the Government have no intention of allowing their followers to vote according to their convictions on the Declaration of London, but insist on a strictly party vote’—*Daily Papers*.)

WE were all one heart and one race

When the Abbey trumpets blew.

For a moment’s breathing-space

We had forgotten you

Now you return to your honoured place

Panting to shame us anew.

We have walked with the Ages dead—

With our Past alive and ablaze,

And you bid us pawn our honour for bread,

This day of all the days!

THE DECLARATION OF LONDON 7

And you cannot wait till our guests are  
    sped,

Or last week's wreath decays ?

The light is still in our eyes  
    Of Faith and Gentlehood,  
Of Service and Sacrifice ,  
    And it does not match our mood,  
To turn so soon to your treacheries  
    That starve our land of her food.

Our ears still carry the sound  
    Of our once Imperial seas,  
Exultant after our King was crowned,  
    Beneath the sun and the breeze.  
It is too early to have them bound  
    Or sold at your decrees.

Wait till the memory goes,  
    Wait till the visions fade,

We may betray in time, God knows,  
But we would not have it said,  
When you make report to our scornful foes,  
That we kissed as we betrayed !

## ULSTER

1912

( ' Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover  
themselves with their works their works are works of iniquity,  
and the act of violence is in their hands '—*Isaiah* lix 6 )

THE dark eleventh hour  
Draws on and sees us sold  
To every evil power  
We fought against of old.  
Rebellion, rapine, hate,  
Oppression, wrong and greed  
Are loosed to rule our fate,  
By England's act and deed

The Faith in which we stand,  
The laws we made and guard,  
Our honour, lives, and land  
Are given for reward

## THE YEARS BETWEEN

To Murder done by night,  
To Treason taught by day,  
To folly, sloth, and spite,  
And we are thrust away

The blood our fathers spilt,  
Our love, our toils, our pains,  
Are counted us for guilt,  
And only bind our chains.  
Before an Empire's eyes  
The traitor claims his price.  
What need of further lies?  
We are the sacrifice.

We asked no more than leave  
To reap where we had sown,  
Through good and ill to cleave  
To our own flag and throne.

Now England's shot and steel  
Beneath that flag must show  
How loyal hearts should kneel  
To England's oldest foe

We know the war prepared  
On every peaceful home,  
We know the hells declared  
For such as serve not Rome—  
The terrior, threats, and dread  
In market, hearth, and field—  
We know, when all is said,  
We perish if we yield.

Believe, we dare not boast,  
Believe, we do not fear—  
We stand to pay the cost  
In all that men hold dear.

## THE YEARS BETWEEN

What answer from the North?

One Law, one Land, one Throne.

If England drive us forth

We shall not fall alone.

## THE COVENANT

1914

WE thought we ranked above the chance of ill.

Others might fall, not we, for we were wise—  
Merchants in freedom. So, of our free-will

We let our servants drug our strength with  
lies.

The pleasure and the poison had its way

On us as on the meanest, till we learned  
That he who lies will steal, who steals will slay.

Neither God's judgment nor man's heart was  
turned

Yet there remains His Mercy—to be sought

Through wrath and peril till we cleanse the  
wrong



By that last right which our forefathers claimed  
When their Law failed them and its stewards  
were bought.

This is our cause. God help us, and make strong  
Our wills to meet Him later, unashamed !

## FRANCE

1913

*BROKE to every known mischance, lifted over all  
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul ;  
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,  
Terrible with strength that draws from her tireless soul ;  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's  
mind,  
First to follow Truth and last to leave old Truths  
behind—  
France, beloved of every soul that loves its fellow-kind !*

Ere our birth (rememberest thou ?) side by side we  
lay  
Fretting in the womb of Rome to begin our fray.

Ere men knew our tongues apart, our one task was  
known—

Each must mould the other's fate as he wrought  
his own

To this end we stirred mankind till all Earth was  
ours,

Till our world-end strifes begat wayside thrones  
and powers—

Puppets that we made or broke to bar the other's  
path—

Necessary, outpost folk, hirelings of our  
wrath

To this end we stormed the seas, tack for tack, and  
burst

Through the doorways of new worlds, doubtful  
which was first,

Hand on hilt (rememberest thou?) ready for the  
blow—

Sure, whatever else we met, we should meet our  
foe.

Spurred or balked at every stride by the other's  
strength,  
So we rode the ages down and every ocean's length!

Where did you refrain from us or we refrain from you?  
Ask the wave that has not watched war between  
us two!

Others held us for a while, but with weaker charms,  
These we quitted at the call for each other's arms.  
Eager toward the known delight, equally we  
strove—

Each the other's mystery, terror, need, and love  
To each other's open court with our proofs we  
came.

Where could we find honour else, or men to test  
our claim?

From each other's throat we wrenched—valour's  
last reward—

That 'extorted word of praise gasped 'twixt lunge  
and guard

In each other's cup we poured mingled blood and  
tears,

Brutal joys, unmeasured hopes, intolerable fears—  
All that soiled or salted life for a thousand years.  
Proved beyond the need of proof, matched in every  
crime,

O companion, we have lived greatly through all  
time!

Yoked in knowledge and remorse, now we come to  
rest,

Laughing at old villainies that Time has turned to  
jest,

Pardoning old necessities no pardon can efface—  
That undying sin we shared in Rouen market-  
place.

Now we watch the new years shape, wondering if  
they hold

Fiercer lightnings in their heart than we launched  
of old.

Now we hear new voices rise, question, boast or  
gird,

As we raged (rememberest thou ?) when our-crowds  
were stirred,

Now we count new keels afloat, and new hosts on  
land,

Massed like ours (rememberest thou ?) when our  
strokes were planned

We were schooled for dear life's sake, to know each  
other's blade

What can blood and iron make more than we have  
made ?

We have learned by keenest use to know each  
other's mind

What shall blood and iron loose that we cannot  
bind ?

We who swept each other's coast, sacked each  
other's home,

Since the sword of Brennus clashed on the scales  
at Rome,

Listen, count and close again, wheeling girth to  
girth,  
In the linked and steadfast guard set for peace on  
earth !

Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all  
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the  
Gaul ;  
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,  
Terrible with strength renewed from a tireless soil ;  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's  
mind,  
First to face the Truth and last to leave old Truths  
behind—  
France, beloved of every soul that loves or serves its  
kind !

‘FOR ALL WE HAVE AND ARE’

1914

For all we have and are,  
For all our children's fate,  
Stand up and take the war,  
The Hun is at the gate !  
Our world has passed away,  
In wantonness o'erthrown  
There is nothing left to-day  
But steel and fire and stone !  
    Though all we knew depart,  
    The old Commandments stand :—  
    ‘In courage keep your heart,  
    In strength lift up your hand.’

Once more we hear the word  
That sickened earth of old —



'No law except the Sword  
Unsheathed and uncontrolled.'  
Once more it knits mankind,  
Once more the nations go  
To meet and break and bind  
A crazed and driven foe.

Comfort, content, delight,  
The ages' slow-bought gain,  
They shrivelled in a night  
Only ourselves remain  
To face the naked days  
In silent fortitude,  
Through perils and dismays  
Renewed and re-renewed  
    Though all we made depart,  
    The old Commandments stand :—  
    'In patience keep your heart,  
    In strength lift up your hand.'

No easy hope or lies  
Shall bring us to our goal,  
But iron sacrifice  
Of body, 'will, and soul  
There is but one task for all—  
One life for each to give  
Who stands if Freedom fall?  
Who dies if England live?

## A SONG IN STORM

Be well assured that on our side  
The abiding oceans fight,  
Though headlong wind and heaping tide  
Make us their sport to-night.  
By force of weather not of war  
In jeopardy we steer,  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it shall appear,  
How in all time of our distress,  
And our deliverance too,  
The game is more than the player of the game,  
And the ship is more than the crew

Out of the mist into the mirk  
The glimmering combers roll.

Almost these mindless waters work  
As though they had a soul—  
Almost as though they leagued to whelm  
Our flag beneath their green  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it shall be seen, etc

Be well assured, though wave and wind  
Have weightier blows in store,  
That we who keep the watch assigned  
Must stand to it the more ;  
And as our streaming bows rebuke  
Each billow's baulked career,  
Sing, welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it is made clear, etc.

No matter though our deck be swept  
And masts and timber crack—  
We can make good all loss except  
The loss of turning back.

So, 'twixt these Devils and our deep

Let courteous trumpets sound,

To welcome Fate's discourtesy

Whereby it will be found, etc.

Be well assured, though in our power

Is nothing left to give

But chance and place to meet the hour,

And leave to strive to live,

Till these dissolve our Order holds,

Our Service binds us here.

Then welcome Fate's discourtesy

Whereby it is made clear.

How in all time of our distress,

And in our triumph too,

The game is more than the player of the game,

And the ship is more than the crew !

## THE OUTLAWS

1914

THROUGH learned and laborious years  
They set themselves to find  
Fresh terrors and undreamed-of fears  
To heap upon mankind.

All that they drew from Heaven above  
Or digged from earth beneath,  
They laid into their treasure-trove  
And arsenals of death :

While, for well-weighed advantage sake,  
Ruler and ruled alike  
Built up the faith they meant to break  
When the fit hour should strike.

They traded with the careless earth,  
And good return it gave ;  
They plotted by their neighbour's hearth  
The means to make him slave.

When all was ready to their hand  
They loosed their hidden sword,  
And utterly laid waste a land  
Their oath was pledged to guard.

Coldly they went about to raise  
To life and make more dread  
Abominations of old days,  
That men believed were dead

They paid the price to reach their goal  
Across a world in flame ;  
But their own hate slew their own soul  
Before that victory came.

## ZION

THE Doorkeepers of Zion,  
They do not always stand  
In helmet and whole armour,  
With halberds in their hand ,  
But, being sure of Zion,  
And all her mysteries,  
They rest awhile in Zion,  
Sit down and smile in Zion ;  
Ay, even jest in Zion ;  
In Zion, at their ease.

The Gatekeepers of Baal,  
They dare not sit or lean,  
But fume and fret and posture  
And foam and curse between ;



For being bound to Baal,  
Whose sacrifice is vain.  
Their rest is scant with Baal,  
They glare and pant for Baal,  
They mouth and rant for Baal,  
For Baal in their pain !

But we will go to Zion,  
By choice and not through dread,  
With these our present comrades  
And those our present dead ;  
And, being free of Zion  
In both her fellowships,  
Sit down and sup in Zion—  
Stand up and drink in Zion  
Whatever cup in Zion  
Is offered to our lips !

## LORD ROBERTS

1914

He passed in the very battle-smoke  
Of the war that he had descried  
Three hundred mile of cannon spoke  
When the Master-Gunner died

He passed to the very sound of the guns ;  
But, before his eye grew dim,  
He had seen the faces of the sons  
Whose sires had served with him.

He had touched their sword-hilts and greeted  
each  
With the old sure word of praise ;  
And there was virtue in touch and speech  
As it had been in old days.

So he dismissed them and took his rest,  
And the steadfast spirit went forth  
Between the adoring East and West  
And the tireless guns of the North.

Clean, simple, valiant, well-beloved,  
Flawless in faith and fame,  
Whom neither ease nor honours moved  
An hair's-breadth from his aim.

Never again the war-wise face,  
The weighed and urgent word  
That pleaded in the market-place—  
Pleaded and was not heard !

Yet from his life a new life springs  
Through all the hosts to come,  
And Glory is the least of things  
That follow this man home.

## THE QUESTION

1916

BRETHREN, how shall it fare with me

When the war is laid aside,

If it be proven that I am he

For whom a world has died ?

If it be proven that all my good,

And the greater good I will make,

Were purchased me by a multitude

Who suffered for my sake ?

That I was delivered by mere mankind

Vowed to one sacrifice,

And not, as I hold them, battle-blind,

But dying with open eyes ?

That they did not ask me to draw the sword  
When they stood to endure their lot—  
That they only looked to me for a word,  
And I answered I knew them not?

If it be found, when the battle clears,  
Their death has set me free,  
Then how shall I live with myself through  
the years  
Which they have bought for me?

Brethren, how must it fare with me,  
Or how am I justified,  
If it be proven that I am he  
For whom mankind has died,  
If it be proven that I am he  
Who being questioned denied?

## THE CHOICE

1917

(THE AMERICAN SPIRIT SPEAKS)

*To the Judge of Right and Wrong*

*With Whom fulfilment lies*

*Our purpose and our power belong,*

*Our faith and sacrifice.*

Let Freedom's Land rejoice '

Our ancient bonds are riven ;

Once more to us the eternal choice

Of Good or Ill is given.

Not at a little cost,

Hardly by prayer or tears,

Shall we recover the road we lost

In the drugged and doubting years.

But, after the fires and the wrath,  
But, after searching and pain,  
His Mercy opens us a path  
To live with ourselves again.

In the Gates of Death rejoice !  
We see and hold the good—  
Bear witness, Earth, we have made our c  
With Freedom's brotherhood !

Then praise the Lord Most High  
Whose Strength hath saved us whole,  
Who bade us choose that the Flesh shou  
And not the living Soul !

*To the God in Man displayed—  
Where e'er we see that Birth,  
Be love and understanding paid  
As never yet on earth !*

## THE CHOICE

37

*To the Spirit that moves in Man,  
On Whom all worlds depend,  
Be Glory since our world began  
And service to the end!*



## THE HOLY WAR

1917

( 'For here lay the excellent wisdom of him that built Mans  
that the walls could never be broken down nor hurt by  
most mighty adverse potentate unless the townsmen ;  
consent thereto '—BUNYAN'S *Holy War* )

*A TINKER out of Bedford,*

*A vagrant oft in quod,*

*A private under Fairfax,*

*A minister of God—*

*Two hundred years and thirty*

*Ere Armageddon came*

*His single hand portrayed it,*

*And Bunyan was his name !*

He mapped, for those who follow,

The world in which we are—

‘This famous town of Mansoul’  
That takes the Holy War  
Her true and traitor people,  
The gates along her wall,  
From Eye Gate unto Feel Gate,  
John Bunyan showed them all.

All enemy divisions,  
Recruits of every class,  
And highly-screened positions  
For flame or poison-gas,  
The craft that we call modern,  
The crimes that we call new,  
John Bunyan had ’em typed and filed  
In Sixteen Eighty-two

Likewise the Lords of Looseness  
That hamper faith and works,

## THE YEARS BETWEEN

The Perseverance-Doubters,  
And Present-Comfort shirks,  
With brittle intellectuals  
Who crack beneath a strain—  
John Bunyan met that helpful set  
In Charles the Second's reign.

Emmanuel's vanguard dying  
For right and not for rights,  
My Lord Apollyon lying  
To the State-kept Stockholmites,  
The Pope, the swithering Neutrals,  
The Kaiser and his Gott—  
Their rôles, their goals, their naked  
souls—  
He knew and drew the lot.

Now he hath left his quarters,  
In Bunhill Fields to he.

The wisdom that he taught us  
Is proven prophecy—  
One watchword through our armies,  
One answer from our lands —  
'No dealings with Diabolus  
As long as Mansoul stands

*A pedlar from a hovel,  
The lowest of the low,  
The father of the Novel,  
Salvation's first Defoe,  
Eight blinded generations  
Ere Armageddon came,  
He showed us how to meet it,  
And Bunyan was his name '*

## THE HOUSES

(A SONG OF THE DOMINIONS)

1898

'TwiXT my house and thy house the pathway is  
broad,  
In thy house or my house is half the world's hoard ;  
By my house and thy house hangs all the world's  
fate,  
On thy house and my house lies half the world's  
hate.

For my house and thy house no help shall we find  
Save thy house and my house—kin cleaving to  
kind :  
If my house be taken, thine tumbleth anon,  
If thy house be forfeit, mine followeth soon.

Twixt my house and thy house what talk can  
there be

Of headship or lordship, or service or fee?

Since my house to thy house no greater can send  
Than thy house to my house—friend comforting  
friend;

And thy house to my house no meaner can bring  
Than my house to thy house—King counselling  
King.

## RUSSIA TO THE PACIFISTS

God rest you, peaceful gentlemen, let nothing you  
dismay,

But—leave your sports a little while—the dead are  
borne this way<sup>1</sup>

Armies dead and Cities dead, past all count or  
care.

God rest you, merry gentlemen, what portent see  
you there?

Singing.—Break ground for a wearied host  
That have no ground to keep  
Give them the rest that they covet  
most .

And who shall next to sleep, good  
sirs,

In such a trench to sleep?

God rest you, peaceful gentlemen, but give us  
leave to pass.

We go to dig a nation's grave as great as England  
was.

For this Kingdom and this Glory and this Power  
and this Pride

Three hundred years it flourished—in three hundred  
days it died.

Sing,ng —Pour oil for a frozen throng,

That lie about the ways.

Give them the warmth they have lacked  
so long .

And what shall be next to blaze, good  
sirs,

On such a pyre to blaze?

God rest you, thoughtful gentlemen, and send your  
sleep is light !

Remains of this dominion no shadow, sound, or  
sight,



Except the sound of weeping and the sight of burning fire,  
And the shadow of a people that is trampled into mire.

Singing.—Break bread for a starving folk  
That perish in the field.  
Give them their food as they take the  
yoke . . .  
And who shall be next to yield, good  
sirs,  
For such a bribe to yield?

God rest you, merry gentlemen, and keep you in  
your mirth !  
Was ever kingdom turned so soon to ashes, blood,  
and earth ?  
'Twixt the summer and the snow—seeding-time and  
frost—  
Arms and victual, hope and counsel, name and  
country lost !

Singing :—*Let down by the foot and the head—*

*Shovel and smooth it all !*

*So do we bury a Nation dead . . .*

And who shall be next to fall, good sirs,

With your good help to fall ?

## THE IRISH GUARDS

1918

WE'RE not so old in the Army List,  
But we're not so young at our trade,  
For we had the honour at Fontenoy  
Of meeting the Guards' Brigade  
'Twas Lally, Dillon, Bulkeley, Clare,  
And Lee that led us then,  
And after a hundred and seventy years  
We're fighting for France again '  
*Old Days ' The wild geese are fighting,  
Head to the storm as they faced it before '  
For where there are Irish there's bound to  
fighting,  
And when there's no fighting, it's Ireland no mo.  
Ireland no more*

The fashion's all for khaki now,  
But once through France we went  
Full-dressed in scarlet Army cloth,  
The English—left at Ghent  
They're fighting on our side to-day  
But, before they changed their clothes,  
The half of Europe knew our fame,  
As all of Ireland knows !

*Old Days ! The wild geese are flying,  
Head to the storm as they faced it before '  
For where there are Irish there's memory  
undying,  
And when we forget, it is Ireland no more '  
Ireland no more '*

From Barry Wood to Gouzeaucourt,  
From Boyne to Pilkem Ridge,  
The ancient days come back no more  
Than water under the bridge

But the bridge it stands and the water runs

As red as yesterday,

And the Irish move to the sound of the guns

Like salmon to the sea

*Old Days! The wild geese are ranging,*

*Head to the storm as they faced it before!*

*For where there are Irish their hearts are u  
changing,*

*And when they are changed, it is Ireland  
more!*

*Ireland no more!*

We're not so old in the Army List,

But we're not so new in the ring,

For we carried our packs with Marshal Saxe

When Louis was our King

But Douglas Haig's our Marshal now

And we're King George's men,

And after one hundred and seventy years

We're fighting for France again!

*Ah, France! And did we stand by you,  
When life was made splendid with gifts and  
rewards?*

*Ah, France! And will we deny you  
In the hour of your agony, Mother of Swords?  
Old Days! The wild geese are fighting,  
Head to the storm as they faced it before!  
For where there are Irish there's loving and  
fighting,  
And when we stop either, it's Ireland no more!  
Ireland no more!*

## A NATIVITY

1916

*THE Babe was laid in the Manger*

*Between the gentle line—*

*All safe from cold and danger—*

‘ But it was not so with mine.

(With mine ! With mine !)

‘ Is it well with the child, is it well ?’

The waiting mother prayed.

‘ For I know not how he fell,

And I know not where he is laid.’

*A Star stood forth in Heaven ,*

*The watchers ran to see*

*The Sign of the Promise given—*

‘ But there comes no sign to me.

(To me ! To me !)

‘ *My* child died in the dark.

Is it well with the child, is it well ?

There was none to tend him or mark,

And I know not how he fell ’

*The Cross was raised on high ;*

*The Mother grieved beside—*

‘ But the Mother saw Him die

And took Him when He died.

(He died ! He died !)

‘ Seemly and undefiled

His burial-place was made—

Is it well, is it well with the child ?

For I know not where he is laid.’

*On the dawning of Easter Day*

*Comes Mary Magdalene ;*

*But the Stone was rolled away,*

*And the Body was not within—*

(Within ! Within !)



‘ Ah, who will answer my word ? ’

The broken mother prayed.

‘ They have taken away my Lord,

And I know not where He is laid.’

. . . . .

*The Star stands forth in Heaven.*

*The watchers watch in vain*

*For a Sign of the Promise given*

*Of peace on Earth again—*

(Again ! Again !)

‘ But I know for Whom he fell ’—

The steadfast mother smiled

‘ Is it well with the child—is it well ?

It is well—it is well with the child ! ’

## EN-DOR

‘Behold there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor’

*1 Samuel xxviii 7*

THE road to En-dor is easy to tread

For Mother or yearning Wife.

There, it is sure, we shall meet our Dead

As they were even in life

Earth has not dreamed of the blessing in store

For desolate hearts on the road to En-dor

Whispers shall comfort us out of the dark—

Hands—ah God !—that we knew !

Visions and voices—look and heark !—

Shall prove that our tale is true,

And that those who have passed to the further

shore     •

May be hailed—at a price—on the road to En-dor.

But they are so deep in their new eclipse

Nothing they say can reach,

Unless it be uttered by alien lips

And framed in a stranger's speech.

The son must send word to the mother that bore,

Through an hireling's mouth. 'Tis the rule

En-dor

And not for nothing these gifts are shown

By such as delight our dead.

They must twitch and stiffen and slaver a  
groan

Ere the eyes are set in the head,

And the voice from the belly begins Therefore

We pay them a wage where they ply at En-dor.

Even so, we have need of faith

And patience to follow the clue.

Often, at first, what the dear one saith

Is babble, or jest, or untrue.

(Lying spirits perplex us sore  
Till our loves—and our lives—are well known  
at En-dor). . .

*Oh the road to En-dor is the oldest road  
And the craziest road of all!  
Straight it runs to the Witch's abode,  
As it did in the days of Saul,  
And nothing has changed of the sorrow in store  
For such as go down on the road to En-dor !*

## A RECANTATION

(TO LYDE OF THE MUSIC HALLS)

WHAT boots it on the Gods to call?  
Since, answered or unheard,  
We perish with the Gods and all  
Things made—except the Word.

Ere certain Fate had touched a heart  
By fifty years made cold,  
I judged thee, Lyde, and thy art  
O'erblown and over-bold

But he—but he, of whom bereft  
I suffer vacant days—  
He on his shield not meanly left—  
He cherished all thy lays.

Witness the magic coffer stocked  
With convoluted runes  
Wherein thy very voice was locked  
And linked to circling tunes

Witness thy portrait, smoke-defiled,  
That decked his shelter-place.  
Life seemed more present, wrote the child,  
Beneath thy well-known face.

And when the grudging days restored  
Him for a breath to home,  
He, with fresh crowds of youth, adored  
Thee making mirth in Rome

Therefore, I, humble, join the hosts,  
Loyal and loud, who bow  
To thee as Queen of Songs—and ghosts—  
For I remember how

Never more rampant rose the Hall  
At thy audacious line  
Than when the news came in from Gaul  
Thy son had—followed mine.

But thou didst hide it in thy breast  
And, capering, took the brunt  
Of blaze and blare, and launched the jest  
That swept next week the front.

Singer to children ! Ours possessed  
Sleep before noon—but thee,  
Wakeful each midnight for the rest,  
No holocaust shall free

Yet they who use the Word assigned,  
To hearten and make whole,  
Not less than Gods have served mankind,  
Though vultures rend their soul.

## ‘MY BOY JACK

‘HAVE you news of my boy Jack?’

*Not this tide.*

‘When d’ you think that he’ll come back?’

*Not with this wind blowing, and this tide*

‘Has any one else had word of him?’

*Not this tide.*

*For what is sunk will hardly swim,*

*Not with this wind blowing, and this tide*

‘Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?’

*None this tide,*

*Nor any tide,*

*Except he did not shame his kind—*

*Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.*



*Then hold your head up all the more,*

*This tide,*

*And every tide;*

*Because he was the son you bore,*

*And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!*

## THE VERDICTS

(JUTLAND)

Not in the thick of the fight,  
Not in the press of the odds,  
Do the heroes come to their height,  
Or we know the demi-gods.

That stands over till peace.  
We can only perceive  
Men returned from the seas,  
Very grateful for leave.

They grant us sudden days  
Snatched from their business of war ;  
But we are too close to appraise  
What manner of men they are.

And, whether their names go down  
    With age-kept victories,  
Or whether they battle and drown  
    Unreckoned, is hid from our eyes.

They are too near to be great,  
    But our children shall understand  
When and how our fate  
    Was changed, and by whose hand

Our children shall measure their worth.  
    We are content to be blind  
But we know that we walk on a new-born ear  
    With the saviours of mankind.

## MESOPOTAMIA

1917

THEY shall not return to us, the resolute, the young,  
The eager and whole-hearted whom we gave :  
But the men who left them thriftily to die in their  
own dung,  
Shall they come with years and honour to the  
grave?

They shall not return to us, the strong men  
coldly slain  
In sight of help denied from day to day :  
But the men who edged their agonies and chid  
them in their pain,  
Are they too strong and wise to put away ?

Our dead shall not return to us while Day and  
Night divide—

Never while the bars of sunset hold :  
But the idle-minded overlings who quibbled while  
they died,  
Shall they thrust for high employments as of  
old ?

Shall we only threaten and be angry for an hour ?  
When the storm is ended shall we find  
How softly but how swiftly they have sidled back  
to power  
By the favour and contrivance of their kind ?

Even while they soothe us, while they promise  
large amends,  
Even while they make a show of fear,  
Do they call upon their debtors, and take council  
with their friends,  
To confirm and re-establish each career ?

•

Their lives cannot repay us—their death could not  
undo—

The shame that they have laid upon our race :  
But the slothfulness that wasted and the arrogance  
that slew,

Shall we leave it unabated in its place ?

## THE HYÆNAS

AFTER the burial-parties leave  
And the baffled kites have fled,  
The wise hyænas come out at eve  
To take account of our dead.

How he died and why he died  
Troubles them not a whit  
They snout the bushes and stones aside  
And dig till they come to it.

They are only resolute they shall eat  
That they and their mates may thrive,  
And they know that the dead are safer meat  
Than the weakest thing alive

(For a goat may butt, and a worm may sting,  
And a child will sometimes stand ;  
But a poor dead soldier of the King  
Can never lift a hand )

They whoop and halloo and scatter the dirt  
Until their tushes white  
Take good hold in the army shirt,  
And tug the corpse to light

And the pitiful face is shewn again  
For an instant ere they close ;  
But it is not discovered to living men—  
Only to God and ~~to those~~

Who, being soulless, are free from shame,  
Whatever meat they may find.  
Nor do they defile the dead man's name—  
That is reserved for his kind.



## THE SPIES' MARCH

(BEFORE THE WAR)

( 'The outbreak is in full swing and our death-rate would sicken Napoleon . . . D1 M—— died last week, and C—— on Monday, but some more medicines are coming . . . We don't seem to be able to check it at all . . . Villages panicking badly . . . In some places not a living soul . . . But at any rate the experience gained may come in useful, so I am keeping my notes written up to date in case of accident . . . Death is a queer chap to live with for steady company.' *Extract from a private letter from Manchuria* )

THERE are no leaders to lead us to honour, and yet  
without leaders we sally,

Each man reporting for duty alone, out of sight,  
out of reach, of his fellow.

There are no bugles to call the battalions, and yet  
without bugles we rally

From the ends of the earth to the ends of the  
earth, to follow the Standard of Yellow !

*Fall in ! O fall in ! O fall in !*

Not where the squadrons mass,

Not where the bayonets shine,

Not where the big shell shout as they pass

Over the firing-line ;

Not where the wounded are,

Not where the nations die,

Killed in the cleanly game of war—

That is no place for a spy !

O Princes, Thrones and Powers, your work  
is less than ours—

~~Here is no place for a spy !~~

Trained to another use,

We march with colours furled,

Only concerned when Death breaks loose

On a front of half a world.

## THE YEARS BETWEEN

Only for General Death  
The Yellow Flag may fly,  
While we take post beneath—  
That is the place for a spy  
Where Plague has spread his pinions over  
Nations and Dominions—  
Then will be work for a spy!

The dropping shots begin,  
The single funerals pass,  
Our skirmishers run in,  
The corpses dot the grass!  
The howling towns stampede,  
~~The tainted hamlets die~~  
Now it is war indeed—  
Now there is room for a spy!  
O Peoples, Kings and Lands, we are wait-  
ing your commands—  
What is the work for a spy?  
(DRUMS)—' *Fear is upon us, spy!*

‘Go where his pickets hide—  
Unmask the shapes they take,  
Whether a gnat from the waterside,  
Or stinging fly in the brake,  
Or filth of the crowded street,  
Or a sick rat limping by,  
Or a smear of spittle dried in the heat—  
That is the work of a spy !  
(DRUMS)—*Death is upon us, spy !*

‘What does he next prepare ?  
Whence will he move to attack ?—  
By water, earth or air ?—  
How can we head him back ?  
Shall we starve him out if we burn  
Or bury his food-supply ?  
Slip through his lines and learn—  
That is work for a spy !  
(DRUMS)—*Get to your business, spy !*

‘Does he feint or strike in force ?

Will he charge or ambuscade ?

What is it checks his course ?

Is he beaten or only delayed ?

How long will the lull endure ?

Is he retreating ? Why ?

Crawl to his camp and make sure--

That is the work for a spy !

(DRUMS)—*Fetch us our answer, spy !*

‘Ride with him girth to girth

Wherever the Pale Horse wheels,

Wait on his councils, ear to earth,

And say what the dust reveals.

For the smoke of our torment rolls

Where the burning thousands lie ;

What do we care for men’s bodies or souls ?

Bring us deliverance, spy !’

•

## THE SONS OF MARTHA

THE Sons of Mary seldom bothei, for they have  
inherited that good part,  
But the Sons of Martha favour their Mother of the  
careful soul and the troubled heart.  
And because she lost her temper once, and because  
she was rude to the Lord her Guest,  
Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons, world  
without end, reprieve, or rest.

It is their care in all the ages to take the buffet  
and cushion the shock.  
It is their care that the gear engages; it is their  
care that the switches lock.

It is their care that the wheels run truly ; it is their  
care to embark and entrain,  
Tally, transport, and deliver duly the Sons of  
Mary by land and main.

They say to mountains 'Be ye removèd.' They  
say to the lesser floods 'Be dry'  
Under their rods are the rocks removèd—they are  
not afraid of that which is high  
Then do the hill-tops shake to the summit—then  
is the bed of the deep laid bare,  
That the Sons of Mary may overcome it, pleasantly  
sleeping and unaware.

They finger death at their gloves' end where they  
piece and repiece the living wires.  
He rears against the gates they mend : they feed  
him hungry behind their fires.

Early at dawn, ere men see clear, they stumble  
into his terrible stall,  
And hale him forth like a haltered steer, and goad  
and turn him till evenfall.

To these from birth is Belief forbidden ; from these  
till death is Relief afar  
They are concerned with matters hidden—under  
the earth-line their altars are .  
The secret fountains to follow up, waters withdrawn  
to restore to the mouth,  
And gather the floods as in a cup, and pour them  
again at a city's drouth.

They do not preach that their God will rouse them  
a little before the nuts work loose  
They do not teach that His Pity allows them to  
leave their work when they damn-well  
choose.



As in the thronged and the lighted ways, so in the  
dark and the desert they stand,  
Wary and watchful all their days that their  
brethren's days may be long in the land.

Raise ye the stone or cleave the wood to make a  
path more fair or flat,  
Lo, it is black already with blood some Son of  
Martha spilled for that !  
Not as a ladder from earth to Heaven, not as a  
witness to any creed,  
But simple service simply given to his own kind in  
their common need.

And the Sons of Mary smile and are blessed—they  
know the angels are on their side.  
They know in them is the Grace confessed, and for  
them are the Mercies multiplied.

They sit at the Feet—they hear the Word—they  
see how truly the Promise runs :

They have cast their burden upon the Lord, and—  
the Lord He lays it on Martha's Sons !

## MARY'S SON

If you stop to find out what your wages will be  
And how they will clothe and feed you,  
Willie, my son, don't you go on the Sea,  
For the Sea will never need you.

If you ask for the reason of every command,  
And argue with people about you,  
Willie, my son, don't you go on the Land,  
For the Land will do better without you.

If you stop to consider the work you have done  
And to boast what your labour is worth, dear,  
Angels may come for you, Willie, my son,  
But you'll never be wanted on Earth, dear!

## THE SONG OF THE LATHES

1918

(Being the words of the tune hummed at her lathe by  
Mrs L. Embsay, widow )

THE fans and the beltings they roar round me.  
The power is shaking the floor round me  
Till the lathes pick up their duty and the midnight-  
shift takes over.

It is good for me to be here !

*Guns in Flanders—Flanders guns !*

*(I had a man that worked 'em once !)*

*Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders !*

*Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders !*

*Shells for guns in Flanders ! Feed the guns !*

The cranes and the carriers they boom over  
me,

The bays and the galleries they loom over me,  
With their quarter-mile of pillars growing little in  
the distance :

It is good for me to be here !

The Zeppelins and Gothas they raid over us.  
Our lights give warning, and fade over us.  
(Seven thousand women keeping quiet in the  
darkness!)

Oh, it is good for me to be here !

The roofs and the buildings they grow round  
me,

Eating up the fields I used to know round me ;  
And the shed that I began in is a sub-inspector's  
office—

So long have I been here !

I've seen six hundred mornings make our lamps  
grow dim,

Through the bit that isn't painted round our sky-  
light rim,

And the sunshine in the window slope according  
to the seasons,

Twice since I've been here.

The trains on the sidings they call to us

With the hundred thousand blanks that they haul  
to us;

And we send 'em what we've finished, and they  
take it where it's wanted,

For that is why we are here!

Man's hate passes as his love will pass.

God made woman what she always was.

Them that bear the burden they will never grant  
forgiveness

So long as they are here!

Once I was a woman, but that's by with me.  
All I loved and looked for, it must die with me.  
But the Lord has left me over for a servant of the  
Judgment,  
And I serve His Judgments here!

*Guns in Flanders—Flanders guns !*  
*(I had a son that worked 'em once !)*  
*Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders !*  
*Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders !*  
*Shells for guns in Flanders ! Feed the guns !*

## GETHSEMANE

THE Garden called Gethsemane  
In Picardy it was,  
And there the people came to see  
The English soldiers pass.  
We used to pass—we used to pass  
Or halt, as it might be,  
And ship our masks in case of gas  
Beyond Gethsemane.

The Garden called Gethsemane,  
It held a pretty lass,  
But all the time she talked to me  
I prayed my cup might pass.  
The officer sat on the chair,  
The men lay on the grass,  
And all the time we halted there  
I prayed my cup might pass—



## THE YEARS BETWEEN

It didn't pass—it didn't pass—

It didn't pass from me.

I drank it when we met the gas

Beyond Gethsemane.

## THE PRO-CONSULS

*THE overfaithful sword returns the user  
His heart's desire at price of his heart's blood.  
The clamour of the arrogant accuser  
Wastes that one hour we needed to make good.  
This was foretold of old at our outgoing ;  
This we accepted who have squandered, knowing,  
The strength and glory of our reputations,  
At the day's need, as it were dross, to guard  
The tender and new-dedicate foundations  
Against the sea we fear—not man's award.*

They that dig foundations deep,  
Fit for realms to rise upon,  
Little honour do they reap  
Of their generation,

Any more than mountains gain  
Stature till we reach the plain.

With no veil before their face  
Such as shroud or sceptre lend—  
Daily in the market-place,  
Of one height to foe and friend—  
They must cheapen self to find  
Ends uncheapened for mankind.

Through the night when hirelings rest,  
Sleepless they arise, alone,  
The unsleeping arch to test  
And the o'er-trusted corner-stone,  
'Gainst the need, they know, that lies  
Hid behind the centuries.

Not by lust of praise or show,  
Not by Peace herself betrayed—  
Peace herself must they forego  
Till that peace be fitly made ;

And in single strength uphold  
Wearier hands and hearts acold.

On the stage their act hath framed  
For thy sports, O Liberty !  
Doubted are they, and defamed  
By the tongues their act set free,  
While they quicken, tend and raise  
Power that must their power displace.

Lesser men feign greater goals,  
Failing whereof they may sit  
Scholarly to judge the souls  
That go down into the pit,  
And, despite its certain clay,  
Heave a new world towards the day.

These at labour make no sign,  
More than planets, tides or years  
Which discover God's design,  
Not our hopes and not our fears ;

Nor in aught they gain or lose  
Seek a triumph or excuse.

*For, so the Ark be borne to Zion, who  
Heeds how they perished or were paid that bore it ?  
For, so the Shrine abide, what shame—what pride—  
If we, the priests, were bound or crowned before it ?*

## THE CRAFTSMAN

ONCE, after long-drawn revel at The Mermaid,  
He to the overbearing Boanerges  
Jonson, uttered (If half of it were liquor,  
Blessed be the vintage !)

Saying how, at an alehouse under Cotswold,  
He had made sure of his very Cleopatra,  
Drunk with enormous, salvation-contemning  
Love for a tinker.

How, while he hid from Sir Thomas's keepers,  
Crouched in a ditch and drenched by the midnight  
Dews, he had listened to gipsy Juhet  
Rail at the dawning.

How at Bankside, a boy drowning kittens  
Winced at the business ; whereupon his sister  
(Lady Macbeth aged seven) thrust 'em under,  
Sombrely scornful.

How on a Sabbath, hushed and compassionate—  
She being known since her birth to the townsfolk—  
Stratford dredged and delivered from Avon  
Dripping Ophelia.

So, with a thin third finger marrying  
Drop to wine-drop domed on the table,  
Shakespeare opened his heart till sunrise  
Entered to hear him.

London wakened and he, imperturbable,  
Passed from waking to hurry after shadows . .  
Busied upon shows of no earthly importance?  
Yes, but he knew it !

## THINGS AND THE MAN

(IN MEMORIAM, JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN)

1904

'And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren ;  
and they hated him yet the more '—*Genesis xxxvii. 5.*

Oh ye who hold the written clue  
To all save all unwritten things,  
And, half a league behind, pursue  
The accomplished Fact with flouts and flings,  
Look! To your knee your baby brings  
The oldest tale since Earth began—  
The answer to your worryings  
*' Once on a time there was a Man.'*

He, single-handed, met and slew  
Magicians, Armies, Ogres, Kings.



He lonely 'mid his doubting crew—  
    'In all the loneliness of wings'—  
He fed the flame, he filled the springs,  
    He locked the ranks, he launched the van  
Straight at the grinning Teeth of Things.  
    *'Once on a time there was a Man.'*

The peace of shocked Foundations flew  
    Before his ribald questionings.  
He broke the Oracles in two,  
    And bared the paltry wires and strings.  
He headed desert wanderings,  
    He led his soul, his cause, his clan  
A little from the ruck of Things.  
    *'Once on a time there was a Man.'*

Thrones, Powers, Dominions block the view  
    With episodes and underlings—  
The meek historian deems them true  
    Nor heeds the song that Clio sings—

The simple central truth that stings  
 The mob to boo, the priest to ban ;  
*Things never yet created things—*  
*‘Once on a time there was a Man.’*

A bolt is fallen from the blue.  
 A wakened realm full circle swings  
 Where Dothan’s dreamer dreams anew  
 Of vast and farborne harvestings ;  
 And unto him an Empire clings  
 That grips the purpose of his plan.  
 My Lords, how think you of these things ?  
*Once—in our time—is there a Man ?*

## THE BENEFACTORS

*AH! What avails the classic bent  
And what the cultured word,  
Against the undoctored incident  
That actually occurred?*

*And what is Art whereto we press  
Through paint and prose and rhyme—  
When Nature in her nakedness  
Defeats us every time?*

It is not learning, grace nor gear,  
Nor easy meat and drink,  
But bitter pinch of pain and fear  
That makes creation think.

When in this world's unpleasing youth  
Our god-like race began,  
The longest arm, the sharpest tooth,  
Gave man control of man ;

Till, bruised and bitten to the bone  
And taught by pain and fear,  
He learned to deal the far-off stone,  
And poke the long, safe spear.

So tooth and nail were obsolete  
As means against a foe,  
Till, bored by uniform defeat,  
Some genius built the bow.

Then stone and javelin proved as vain  
As old-time tooth and nail,  
Ere, spurred anew by fear and pain,  
Man fashioned coats of mail.

Then was there safety for the rich  
And danger for the poor,  
Till someone mixed a powder which  
Redressed the scale once more.

Helmet and armour disappeared  
With sword and bow and pike,  
And, when the smoke of battle cleared,  
All men were armed alike. . . .

And when ten million such were slain  
To please one crazy king,  
Man, schooled in bulk by fear and pain,  
Grew weary of the thing;

And, at the very hour designed,  
To enslave him past recall,  
His tooth-stone-arrow-gun-shy mind  
Turned and abolished all

. . . . .

*All Power, each Tyrant, every Mob  
Whose head has grown too large,  
Ends by destroying its own job  
And earns its own discharge.*

*And Man, whose mere necessities  
Move all things from his path,  
Trembles meanwhile at their decrees,  
And deprecates their wrath!*

## THE DEAD KING

(EDWARD VII.)

1910

*WHO in the Realm to-day lays down dear life for the  
sake of a land more dear ?*

*And, unconcerned for his own estate, toils till the last  
grudged sands have run ?*

*Let him approach    It is proven here  
Our King asks nothing of any man more than Our  
King himself has done.*

For to him above all was Life good, above all he  
commanded

Her abundance full-handed.

The peculiar treasure of Kings was his for the taking :  
All that men come to in dreams he inherited  
waking :—

His marvel of world-gathered armies—one heart  
and all races ,

His seas 'neath his keels when his war-castles  
foamed to their places ;

The thundering foreshores that answered his  
heralded landing ;

The huge lighted cities adoring, the assemblies  
upstanding ;

The Councils of Kings called in haste to learn how  
he was minded—

The Kingdoms, the Powers, and the Glories he  
dealt with unblinded.

To him came all captains of men, all achievers of  
glory,

Hot from the press of their battles they told him  
their story.

They revealed him their life in an hour and, saluting,  
departed,



Joyful to labour afresh—he had made them new-hearted.

And, since he weighed men from his youth, and no lie long deceived him,

He spoke and exacted the truth, and the basest believed him.

And God poured him an exquisite wine, that was daily renewed to him,

In the clear-welling love of his peoples that daily accrued to him.

Honour and service we gave him, rejoicingly fearless ;

Faith absolute, trust beyond speech and a friendship as peerless.

And since he was Master and Servant in all that we asked him,

We leaned hard on his wisdom<sup>r</sup> in all things, knowing not how we tasked him.

For on him each new day laid command, every  
tyrannous hour,  
To confront, or confirm, or make smooth some dread  
issue of power ;  
To deliver true judgment aright at the instant,  
unaided,  
In the strict, level, ultimate phrase that allowed or  
dissuaded ;  
To foresee, to allay, to avert from us perils un-  
numbered,  
To stand guard on our gates when he guessed that  
the watchmen had slumbered ;  
To win time, to turn hate, to woo folly to service  
and, mightily schooling  
His strength to the use of his Nations, to rule as  
not ruling.  
These were the works of our King ; Earth's peace  
was the proof of them  
God gave him great works to fulfil, and to us the  
behoof of them.

We accepted his toil as our right—none spared,  
none excused him.

When he was bowed by his burden his rest was  
refused him.

We troubled his age with our weakness—the  
blacker our shame to us !

Hearing his People had need of him, straightway  
he came to us.

As he received so he gave—nothing grudged,  
naught denying,

Not even the last gasp of his breath when he strove  
for us, dying

For our sakes, without question, he put from him  
all that he cherished.

Simply as any that serve him he served and he  
perished.

All that Kings covet was his, and he flung it aside  
for us.

Simply as any that die in his service he died for us.

*Who in the Realm to-day has choice of the easy road or  
the hard to tread ?*

*And, much concerned for his own estate, would sell  
his soul to remain in the sun ?*

*Let him depart nor look on Our dead.*

*Our King asks nothing of any man more than Our  
King himself has done.*

## A DEATH-BED

‘THIS is the State above the Law.

The State exists for the State alone.’

*[This is a gland at the back of the jaw,*

*And an answering lump by the collar-bone.]*

Some die shouting in gas or fire ;

Some die silent, by shell and shot.

Some die desperate, caught on the wire ;

Some die suddenly. This will not.

‘Regis suprema Voluntas lex’

*[It will follow the regular course of—throats.]*

Some die pinned by the broken decks,

Some die sobbing between the boats.

Some die eloquent, pressed to death  
By the sliding trench, as their friends can hear.  
Some die wholly in half a breath  
Some—give trouble for half a year.

‘There is neither Evil nor Good in life  
Except as the needs of the State ordain.’  
[*Since it is rather too late for the knife,*  
*All we can do is to mask the pain.*]

Some die saintly in faith and hope—  
One died thus in a prison-yard—  
Some die broken by rape or the rope ;  
Some die easily. This dies hard.

‘I will dash to pieces who bar my way.  
Woe to the traitor ! Woe to the weak !’  
[*Let him write what he wishes to say.*  
*It tires him out if he tries to speak.*]

Some die quietly    Some abound  
    In loud self-pity.    Others spread  
Bad morale through the cots around . . .  
    This is a type that is better dead.

‘The war was forced on me by my foes.  
    All that I sought was the right to live.’  
*[Don’t be afraid of a triple dose ;  
    The pain will neutralize half we give.*

*Here are the needles.    See that he dies  
    While the effects of the drug endure. . . .  
What is the question he asks with his eyes?—  
    Yes, All-Highest, to God, be sure.]*

## GEHAZI

‘WHENCE comest thou, Gehazi,  
So reverend to behold,  
In scarlet and in ermines  
And chain of England’s gold?’  
‘From following after Naaman  
To tell him all is well,  
Whereby my zeal hath made me  
A Judge in Israel.’

Well done, well done, Gehazi,  
Stretch forth thy ready hand,  
Thou barely ’scaped from judgment,  
Take oath to judge the land,



Unswayed by gift of money  
Or privy bribe, more base,  
Of knowledge which is profit  
In any market-place.

Search out and probe, Gehazi,  
As thou of all canst try,  
The truthful, well-weighed answer  
That tells the blacker lie—  
The loud, uneasy virtue,  
The anger feigned at will,  
To overbear a witness  
And make the Court keep still.

Take order now, Gehazi,  
That no man talk aside  
In secret with his judges  
The while his case is tried.

Lest he should show them—reason

To keep a matter hid,

And subtly lead the questions

Away from what he did.

Thou mirror of uprightness,

What ails thee at thy vows ?

What means the risen whiteness

Of the skin between thy brows ?

The boils that shine and burrow,

The sores that slough and bleed—

The leprosy of Naaman

On thee and all thy seed ?

Stand up, stand up, Gehazi,

Draw close thy robe and go,

Gehazi, Judge in Israel,

A leper white as snow !

## THE VIRGINITY

TRY as he will, no man breaks wholly loose  
From his first love, no matter who she be.  
Oh, was there ever sailor free to choose,  
That didn't settle somewhere near the sea?

Myself, it don't excite me nor amuse  
To watch a pack o' shipping on the sea,  
But I can understand my neighbour's views  
From certain things which have occurred to me.

Men must keep touch with things they used  
use  
To earn their living, even when they are free;  
And so come back upon the least excuse—  
Same as the sailor settled near the sea.

He knows he's never going on no cruise—  
He knows he's done and finished with the sea,  
And yet he likes to feel she's there to use—  
If he should ask her—as she used to be.

Even though she cost him all he had to lose,  
Even though she made him sick to hear or see,  
Still, what she left of him will mostly choose  
Her skuts to sit by. How comes such to be?

*Parsons in pulpits, tax-payers in pews,  
Kings on your thrones, you know as well as me,  
We've only one virginity to lose,  
And where we lost it there our hearts will be!*

## A PILGRIM'S WAY

I do not look for holy saints to guide me on my way,  
Or male and female devilkins to lead my feet  
astray.

If these are added, I rejoyce—if not, I shall not  
mind,

So long as I have leave and choice to meet my  
fellow-kind.

For as we come and as we go (and deadly-soon  
go we !)

The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough  
for me !

Thus I will honour pious men whose virtue shines  
so bright

(Though none are more amazed than I when I by  
chance do right),

And I will pity foolish men for woe their sins have  
bred

(Though ninety-nine per cent. of mine I brought on  
my own head)

And, Amorite or Eremite, or General Averagee,  
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough  
for me !

And when they bore me overmuch, I will not shake  
mine ears,

Recalling many thousand such whom I have bored  
to tears.

And when they labour to impress, I will not doubt  
nor scoff ;

Since I myself have done no less and—sometimes  
pulled it off.

Yea, as we are and we are not, and we pretend  
to be,

The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough  
for me !

And when they work me random wrong, as oftentimes hath been,

I will not cherish hate too long (my hands are none too clean)

And when they do me random good I will not feign surprise,

No more than those whom I have cheered with wayside charities.

But, as we give and as we take—whate'er our takings be—

The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

But when I meet with frantic folk who sinfully declare

There is no pardon for their sin, the same I will not spare

Till I have proved that Heaven and Hell which in our hearts we have

Show nothing irredeemable on either side the  
grave.

For as we live and as we die—if utter Death  
there be—

The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough  
for me !

Deliver me from every pride—the Middle, High,  
and Low—

That bars me from a brother's side, whatever pride  
he show.

And purge me from all heresies of thought and  
speech and pen

That bid me judge him otherwise than I am judged.

*Amen !*

That I may sing of Crowd or King or road-borne  
company,

That I may labour in my day, vocation and  
degree,



To prove the same in deed and name, and hold  
unshakenly

(Where'er I go, whate'er I know, whoe'er my  
neighbour be)

This single faith in Life and Death and all  
Eternity

'The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough  
for me!'

## THE OLDEST SONG

For before Eve was Lilith — *Old Tale.*

THESE were never your true love's eyes.

Why do you feign that you love them?  
You that broke from their constancies,  
And the wide calm brows above them!

THIS was never your true love's speech.

Why do you thrill when you hear it?  
You that have ridden out of its reach  
The width of the world or near it!

THIS was never your true love's hair,—

You that chafed when it bound you  
Screened from knowledge or shame or care,  
In the night that it made around you!

*'All these things I know, I know.*

*And that's why my heart is breaking-!'*

Then what do you gain by pretending so?

*'The joy of an old wound waking.'*

## NATURAL THEOLOGY

### PRIMITIVE

I ATE my fill of a whale that died  
And stranded after a month at sea. . . .  
There is a pain in my inside.  
Why have the Gods afflicted me?  
Ow! I am purged till I am a wraith!  
Wow! I am sick till I cannot see!  
What is the sense of Religion and Faith?  
Look how the Gods have afflicted me!

### PAGAN

How can the skin of rat or mouse hold  
Anything more than a harmless flea? . . .  
The burning plague has taken my household.  
Why have my Gods afflicted me?

All my kith and kin are deceased,  
Though they were as good as good could be.  
' will out and batter the family priest,  
Because my Gods have afflicted me.

## MEDIEVAL

My privy and well drain into each other  
After the custom of Christendie. . .  
Fevers and fluxes are wasting my mother.  
Why has the Lord afflicted me?  
The Saints are helpless for all I offer—  
So are the clergy I used to fee  
Henceforward I keep my cash in my coffer,  
Because the Lord has afflicted me.

## MATERIAL

I run eight hundred hens to the acre.  
They die by dozens mysteriously. .  
I am more than doubtful concerning my Maker.  
Why has the Lord afflicted me?

What a return for all my endeavour—  
 Not to mention the L. S. D. !  
 I am an atheist now and for ever,  
 Because this God has afflicted me !

PROGRESSIVE

Money spent on an Army or Fleet  
 Is homicidal lunacy .  
 My son has been killed in the Mons retreat.  
 Why is the Lord afflicting me ?  
 Why are murder, pillage and arson  
 And rape allowed by the Deity ?  
 I will write to the *Times*, deriding our parson  
 Because my God has afflicted me.

CHORUS

We had a kettle . we let it leak .  
 Our not repairing it made it worse.  
 We haven't had any tea for a week. . . .  
 The bottom is out of the Universe !

## CONCLUSION

This was none of the good Lord's pleasure,  
For the Spirit He breathed in Man is free  
But what comes after is measure for measure  
And not a God that afflicteth thee.  
As was the sowing so the reaping  
Is now and evermore shall be.  
Thou art delivered to thy own keeping.  
Only Thyself hath afflicted thee!

## A SONG AT COCK-CROW

*'Ille autem iterum negavit.'*

THE first time that Peter denied his Lord  
He shrank from the cudgel, the scourge and the  
cord,  
But followed far off to see what they would do,  
Till the cock crew—till the cock crew—  
After Gethsemane, till the cock crew !

The first time that Peter denied his Lord  
'Twas only a maid in the palace who heard,  
As he sat by the fire and warmed himself  
through.  
Then the cock crew ! Then the cock crew !  
( 'Thou also art one of them.' ) Then the cock  
crew !



The first time that Peter denied his Lord  
He had neither the Throne, nor the Keys nor the  
Sword—

A poor silly fisherman, what could he do  
When the cock crew—when the cock crew—  
But weep for his wickedness when the cock crew?

. . . . .

The next time that Peter denied his Lord  
He was Fisher of Men, as foretold by the Word,  
With the Crown on his brow and the Cross on his  
shoe,

When the cock crew—when the cock crew—  
*In Flanders and Picardy when the cock crew.*

The next time that Peter denied his Lord  
'Twas Mary the Mother in Heaven Who heard,  
And She grieved for the maidens and wives that  
they slew

When the cock crew—when the cock crew—  
*At Tirmonde and Aerschott when the cock crew.*

The next time that Peter denied his Lord  
 The Babe in the Manger awakened and stirred,  
 And He stretched out His arms for the playmates

He knew—

When the cock crew—when the cock crew—  
*But the waters had covered them when the cock crew.*

The next time that Peter denied his Lord  
 'Twas Earth in her agony waited his word,  
 But he sat by the fire and naught would he do,  
 Though the cock crew—though the cock crew—  
*Over all Christendom, though the cock crew*

The last time that Peter denied his Lord,  
 The Father took from him the Keys and the Sword,  
 And the Mother and Babe brake his Kingdom in  
 two,

When the cock crew—when the cock crew—  
*(Because of his wickedness) when the cock crew !*

## THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

1911

WHEN the Himalayan peasant meets the he-bear in  
his pride,

He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn  
aside.

But the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant  
tooth and nail

For the female of the species is more deadly than  
the male.

When Nag the basking cobra hears the careless  
foot of man,

He will sometimes wriggle sideways and avoid it as  
he can.

THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES 129

But his mate makes no such motion where she  
camps beside the trail.

For the female of the species is more deadly than  
the male.

When the early Jesuit fathers preached to Hurons  
and Choctaws,

They prayed to be delivered from the vengeance of  
the squaws.

'Twas the women, not the warriors, turned those  
stark enthusiasts pale

For the female of the species is more deadly than  
the male.

Man's timid heart is bursting with the things he  
must not say,

For the Woman that God gave him isn't his to  
give away ;

But when hunter meets with husband, each confirms  
the other's tale—

The female of the species is more deadly than the  
male.

Man, a bear in most relations—worm and savage  
otherwise,—

Man propounds negotiations, Man accepts the  
compromise.

Very rarely will he squarely push the logic of  
a fact

To its ultimate conclusion in unmitigated act.

Fear, or foolishness, impels him, ere he lay the  
wicked low,

To concede some form of trial even to his fiercest  
foe.

Mirth obscene diverts his anger ! Doubt and Pity  
oft perplex  
Him in dealing with an issue—to the scandal of  
The Sex !

But the Woman that God gave him, every fibre of  
her frame  
Proves her launched for one sole issue, armed and  
engined for the same ;  
And to serve that single issue, lest the generations  
fail,  
The female of the species must be deadlier than  
the male.

She who faces Death by torture for each life  
beneath her breast  
May not deal in doubt or pity—must not swerve  
for fact or jest.

These be purely male diversions—not in these her  
honour dwells.

She the Other Law we live by, is that Law and  
nothing else.

She can bring no more to living than the powers  
that make her great

As the Mother of the Infant and the Mistress of  
the Mate!

And when Babe and Man are lacking and she  
strides unclaimed to claim

Her right as femme (and baron), her equipment is  
the same.

She is wedded to convictions—in default of grosser  
ties;

Her contentions are her children, Heaven help him  
who demes!—

He will meet no suave discussion, but the instant,  
white-hot, wild,  
Wakened female of the species warring as for  
spouse and child.

Unprovoked and awful charges—even so the 'she-  
bear fights,  
Speech that drips, corrodes, and poisons—even so  
the cobra bites,  
Scientific vivisection of one nerve till it is  
raw  
And the victim writhes in anguish—like the Jesuit  
with the squaw !

So it comes that Man the coward, when he gathers  
to confer  
With his fellow-braves in council, dare not leave  
a place for her



Where, at war with Life and Conscience, he uplifts  
his erring hands  
To some God of Abstract Justice—which no woman  
understands.

And Man knows it! Knows, moreover, that the  
Woman that God gave him  
Must command but may not govern—shall enthrall  
but not enslave him.  
And *She* knows, because She warns him and Her  
instincts never fail,  
That the Female of Her Species is more deadly  
than the Male.

## EPITAPHS

### 'EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE'

*A.* 'I was a "have."'    *B.* 'I was a "have-not."'

*(Together)* 'What hast thou given which I gave  
not?'

### A SERVANT

We were together since the War began  
He was my servant—and the better man.

### A SON

My son was killed while laughing at some jest. I  
would I knew  
What it was, and it might serve me in a time when  
jests are few.

### AN ONLY SON

I have slain<sup>o</sup> none except my Mother. She  
(Blessing her slayer) died of grief for me.

## EX-CLERK

Pity not! The Army gave  
Freedom to a timid slave :  
In which Freedom did he find  
Strength of body, will, and mind :  
By which strength he came to prove  
Mirth, Companionship, and Love :  
For which Love to Death he went :  
In which Death he lies content.

## THE WONDER

Body and Spirit I surrendered whole  
To harsh Instructors—and received a soul . . .  
If mortal man could change me through and  
through  
From all I was—what may The God not do?

## HINDU SEPOY IN FRANCE

This man in his own country prayed we know not  
to what Powers.

We pray Them to reward him for his bravery in  
ours.

## THE COWARD

I could not look on Death, which being  
known,

Men led me to him, blindfold and alone.

## SHOCK

My name, my speech, my self I had forgot.

My wife and children came—I knew them  
not

I died. My Mother followed. At her call

And on her bosom I remembered all.

## A GRAVE NEAR CAIRO

Gods of the Nile, should this stout fellow here  
Get out—get out! He knows not shame nor fear

## PELICANS IN THE WILDERNESS

## (A GRAVE NEAR HALFA)

The blown sand heaps on me, that none may learn  
Where I am laid for whom my children grieve. . . .  
O wings that beat at dawning, ye return  
Out of the desert to your young at eve!

## THE FAVOUR

Death favoured me from the first, well knowing I  
could not endure  
To wait on him day by day. He quitted my  
betters and came

Whistling over the fields, and, when he had made  
all sure,  
'Thy line is at end,' he said, 'but at least I have  
saved its name.'

## THE BEGINNER

On the first hour of my first day  
In the front trench I fell.  
(Children in boxes at a play  
Stand up to watch it well.)

## R. A. F. (AGED EIGHTEEN)

Laughing through clouds, his milk-teeth still un-  
shed,  
Cities and men he smote from overhead.  
His deaths delivered, he returned to play  
Childlike, with childish things now put away.

## THE REFINED MAN

I was of delicate mind. I went aside for my needs,  
Disdaining the common office. I was seen from  
afar and killed. . . .

How is this matter for mirth? Let each man be  
judged by his deeds

*I have paid my price to live with myself on the terms  
that I willed.*

## NATIVE WATER-CARRIER (M. E. F.)

Prometheus brought down fire to men.

This brought up water.

The Gods are jealous—now, as then,

They gave no quarter.

## BOMBED IN LONDON

On land and sea I strove with anxious care  
To escape conscription. It was in the air!

## THE SLEEPY SENTINEL

Faithless the watch that I kept : now I have none  
to keep.

I was slain because I slept : now I am slain I sleep.  
Let no man reproach me again, whatever watch is  
unkept—

I sleep because I am slain. They slew me because  
I slept.

## BATTERIES OUT OF AMMUNITION

If any mourn us in the workshop, say  
We died because the shift kept holiday.

## COMMON FORM

If any question why we died,  
Tell them, because our fathers lied.

## A DEAD STATESMAN

I could not dig : I dared not rob :  
Therefore I lied to please the mob.



Now all my lies are proved untrue,  
And I must face the men I slew.  
What tale shall save me here among  
Mine angry and defrauded young?

## THE REBEL

If I had clamoured at Thy Gate  
For gift of Life on Earth,  
And, thrusting through the souls that wait,  
Flung headlong into birth—  
Even then, even then, for gin and snare  
About my pathway spread,  
Lord, I had mocked Thy thoughtful care  
Before I joined the Dead !  
But now ? . . . I was beneath Thy Hand  
Ere yet the Planets came.  
And now—though Planets pass, I stand  
The witness to Thy Shame.

## THE OBEDIENT

Daily, though no ears attended,  
Did my prayers arise  
Daily, though no fire descended  
Did I sacrifice. . . .  
Though my darkness did not lift,  
Though I faced no lighter odds,  
Though the Gods bestowed no gift,  
None the less,  
None the less, I served the Gods!

## A DRIFTER OFF TARENTUM

He from the wind-bitten north with ship and  
companions descended,  
Searching for eggs of death spawned by invisible  
hulls.  
Many he found and drew forth. Of a sudden the  
fishery ended  
In flame and a clamorous breath not new to the  
eye-pecking gulls.

## DESTROYERS IN COLLISION

For Fog and Fate no charm is found  
To lighten or amend.  
I, hurrying to my bride, was drowned—  
Cut down by my best friend.

## CONVOY ESCORT

I was a shepherd to fools  
Causelessly bold or afraid.  
They would not abide by my rules.  
Yet they escaped. For I stayed.

## UNKNOWN FEMALE CORPSE

Headless, lacking foot and hand,  
Horrible I come to land.  
I beseech all women's sons<sup>f</sup>  
Know I was a mother once.

## RAPED AND REVENGED

One used and butchered me : another spied  
Me broken—for which thing a hundred died.  
So it was learned among the heathen hosts  
How much a freeborn woman's favour costs.

## SALONIKAN GRAVE

I have watched a thousand days  
Push out and crawl into night  
Slowly as tortoises  
Now I, too, follow these.  
It is fever, and not fight—  
Time, not battle—that slays.

## THE BRIDEGROOM

Call me not false, beloved,  
If, from thy scarce-known breast  
So little time removed,  
In other arms I rest.

For this more ancient bride  
Whom coldly I embrace  
Was constant at my side  
Before I saw thy face.

Our marriage, often set—  
By miracle delayed—  
At last is consummate,  
And cannot be unmade.

Live, then, whom Life shall cure,  
Almost, of Memory,  
And leave us to endure  
Its immortality.

V. A. D. (MEDITERRANEAN)

Ah, would swift ships had never been, for then we  
ne'er had found,  
These harsh Ægean rocks between, this little virgin  
drowned,

Whom neither spouse nor child shall mourn, but  
    men she nursed through pain  
And—certain keels for whose return the heathen  
    look in vain.

## ‘THE CITY OF BRASS’

1909

Here was a people whom after their works thou shalt see wept  
over for their lost dominion: and in this palace is the last  
information respecting lords collected in the dust

*The Arabian Nights*

*In a land that the sand overlays—the ways to her gates  
are untrod—*

*A multitude ended their days whose fates were made  
splendid by God,*

*Till they grew drunk and were smitten with madness  
and went to their fall,*

*And of these is a story written: but Allah alone  
knoweth all!*

When the wine stirred in their heart their bosoms  
dilated,

They rose to suppose themselves kings over all  
things created—

To decree a new earth at a birth without labour or  
sorrow—

To declare: ‘We prepare it to-day and inherit  
to-morrow.’

They chose themselves prophets and priests of  
minute understanding,

Men swift to see done, and outrun, their extremest  
commanding—

Of the tribe which describe with a jibe the per-  
versions of Justice—

Panders avowed to the crowd whatsoever its lust is.

Swiftly these pulled down the walls that their  
fathers had made them—

The impregnable ramparts of old, they razed and  
relaid them



As playgrounds of pleasure and leisure with limitless entries,

And havens of rest for the wastrels where once walked the sentries ;

And because there was need of more pay for the shouters and marchers,

They disbanded in face of their foemen their bowmen and archers.

They replied to their well-wishers' fears—to their enemies' laughter,

Saying: 'Peace! We have fashioned a God Which shall save us hereafter.

We ascribe all dominion to man in his factions conferring,

And have given to numbers the Name of the Wisdom unerring.'

They said: 'Who has hate in his soul? Who has envied his neighbour ?

Let him arise and control both that man and his labour.'

They said: ‘Who is eaten by sloth? Whose un-  
thrift has destroyed him?

He shall levy a tribute from all because none have  
employed him.’

They said: ‘Who hath toiled? Who hath striven,  
and gathered possession?

Let him be spoiled. He hath given full proof of  
transgression.’

They said. ‘Who is irked by the Law? *Though*  
*we may not remove it,*

*If he lend us his aid in this raid, we will set him above it!’*

So the robber did judgment again upon such as  
displeased him,

The slayer, too, boasted his slain, and the judges  
released him.

As for their kinsmen far off, on the skirts of the  
nation,

They harried all earth to make sure none escaped  
reprobation,

They awakened unrest for a jest in their newly-  
won borders,  
And jeered at the blood of their brethren betrayed  
by their orders.

They instructed the ruled to rebel, their rulers to  
aid them ;

And, since such as obeyed them not fell, their  
Viceroys obeyed them.

When the riotous set them at naught they said :  
‘Praise the upheaval !

For the show and the word and the thought of  
Dominion is evil !’

They unwound and flung from them with rage, as a  
rag that defiled them

The imperial gains of the age which their fore-  
fathers piled them.

They ran panting in haste to lay waste and em-  
bitter for ever

The wellsprings of Wisdom and Strength which are  
Faith and Endeavour.

They nosed out and dugged up and dragged forth  
and exposed to derision

All doctrine of purpose and worth and restraint and  
prevision :

And it ceased, and God granted them all things  
for which they had striven,

And the heart of a beast in the place of a man's  
heart was given. . . .

. . . . .

When they were fullest of wine and most flagrant  
in error,

Out of the sea rose a sign—out of Heaven a  
terror.

Then they saw, then they heard, then they knew—  
for none troubled to hide it,

An host had prepared their destruction, but still  
they denied it.

They denied what they dared not abide if it came  
to the trial,

But the Sword that was forged while they lied did  
not heed their denial.

It drove home, and no time was allowed to the  
crowd that was driven.

The preposterous-minded were cowed—they thought  
time would be given.

There was no need of a steed nor a lance to pursue  
them ;

It was decreed their own deed, and not chance,  
should undo them

The tares they had laughingly sown were ripe to  
the reaping,

The trust they had leagued to disown was removed  
from their keeping.

The eaters of other men's bread, the exempted  
from hardship,

The excusers of impotence fled, abdicating their  
wardship.

For the hate they had taught through the State  
 brought the State no defender,  
 And it passed from the roll of the Nations in  
 headlong surrender.

## JUSTICE

OCTOBER 1918

*ACROSS a world where all men grieve  
And grieving strive the more,  
The great days range like tides and leave  
Our dead on every shore.  
Heavy the load we undergo,  
And our own hands prepare,  
If we have parley with the foe,  
The load our sons must bear.*

Before we loose the word  
That bids new worlds to birth,  
Needs must we loosen first the sword  
Of Justice upon earth ;

Or else all else is vain

Since life on earth began,

And the spent world sinks back again

Hopeless of God and Man.

A people and their King

Through ancient sin grown strong,

Because they feared no reckoning

Would set no bound to wrong ;

But now their hour is past,

And we who bore it find

Evil Incarnate held at last

To answer to mankind.

For agony and spoil

Of nations beat to dust,

For poisoned air and tortured soil

And cold, commanded lust,



And every secret woe  
The shuddering waters saw—  
Willed and fulfilled by high and low—  
Let them relearn the Law.

That when the dooms are read,  
Not high nor low shall say :—  
' My haughty or my humble head  
Has saved me in this day.'  
That, till the end of time,  
Their remnant shall recall  
Their fathers' old, confederate crime  
Availed them not at all.

That neither schools nor priests,  
Nor Kings may build again  
A people with the heart of beasts  
Made wise concerning men.

Whereby our dead shall sleep  
 In honour, unbetrayed,  
 And we in faith and honour keep  
 That peace for which they paid.

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